

Balm of A Thousand Flowers

By WILLIAM H. OSBORNE

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"Dear me!" exclaimed little Mrs. Ripley to her husband, the doctor. "Marion's whooping cough is just dreadful, and here we've shipped off all your drugs. I don't know what we'll do. Can't you go out and get some embrocation or some carbocens? The poor child really needs it."

Young Dr. Ripley was busy nailing some bulky wooden packages together. He stopped suddenly and sucked a finger which he had macerated with the hammer. Then he shook his head. "Nance," he replied, "I don't see how we can. I've got just exactly enough to pay our fares down to Longwood, our new town, and the medicines cost money even to a doctor. She'll have to stand it the best she can for the present."

There was wild commotion in the back room, and the young mother sprang to the rescue. In five minutes she returned with the child. "It's just dreadful, Howard," she repeated.

Howard stopped again and glanced at the little girl with a professional air. "I don't know, Nance," he returned, "but that I can do something for her after all. I've got a little spare change. I'll go down to the grocer's and come right back."

When he returned, he went down stairs, and, with the aid of a saucer and a discarded spoon, he mixed some mysterious ingredients together.

"Here, now," he exclaimed, appearing on the landing, "you rub her on the outside with this and give her home internally too. It may do some good."

The mother and the child retired to the back room. Dr. Ripley waited. Finally they came out.

"More," pleaded the youngster. "I want some more. It tastes like sugar."

The next day had installed themselves in their new but dingy little home in an obscure street in Longwood. The young physician at once hung out his sign and then started to put things to rights.

"Do you know, Howard," said Mrs. Ripley, "I believe that stuff you made for Marion really did her some good after all. What was it? She hasn't been nearly so bad as she was."

Dr. Ripley straightened up. "Let me take a look at her. I haven't had time to notice her much. I've been so busy." The youngster was produced. The young physician looked at her critically.

"She does seem better," he admitted; "she certainly does."

"And what did you give her?" inquired his young wife.

Dr. Ripley leaned his head on his hand and thought. He had a sudden idea. He gazed not at his wife, but beyond her. He was looking into the future. His wife joined his elbow.

"What was it?" she repeated.

"Oh," he returned, "that stuff. Why, that was just the balm of a thousand flowers; that's all. And it's a good thing after all."

"Balm of a Thousand Flowers," exclaimed Mrs. Ripley. "I never heard of it."

"Neither did I," returned the doctor, "until now. But that's what it was, nevertheless. And it's a good thing," he added half to himself, "and I'll try it on."

The next day he scoured the printers' offices and finally got one to extend him credit, and a night or two later he was mysteriously absent from his home.

The day after the town, small as it was, fairly bloomed with large but neat placards which read as follows:

RIPLY'S REMEDY.
BALM OF A THOUSAND FLOWERS.
FOR WHOOPING COUGH AND CROUP.
CHILDREN CRY FOR IT.

People stood and gazed at it and wondered what it was. "Balm of a Thousand Flowers." It had an attractive oriental sound. "Yes," thought Dr. Ripley to himself, "I am sure that it will sell."

But there was a trifling error in his reckoning.

That error was due to the insignificant fact that in Longwood at present there was not a single case of croup or whooping cough except that of his small daughter. Dr. Ripley sat for a few minutes and thought about it.

"Nance," he said after awhile, "if you want that child to get better you must let her get out in the open air. Medicine can do much, but air is the important thing after all. Send her out and let her play."

"But, Howard," protested his better half, "there's no place for her to go but in the street. We haven't any back yard, you know. And the street is full of children, and they'll take it."

Howard shook his head. "Full of children?" he mused. "Well, self preservation is the first law of nature, and she must have the air. Send her out. The children must take care of themselves."

The doctor's youngest was a companionable little girl and soon made friends, and she speedily became exceedingly popular because she could do certain things the others couldn't do. Some of the things that she could do were to stand on one leg and wind the other round it and double herself into a human knot and grow black in the face and utter wild wail yells of warfare. She didn't enjoy these things, but they did, and whenever she started in she was surrounded by an interested

crowd. If she had had her father's business ability, she could have put up a tent and exhibited herself for a small consideration.

And so Marion got plenty of fresh air and incidentally all Longwood took the whooping cough. It was only a question of time.

It so happened that school opened about two weeks after the doctor had tacked up his placards through the town. The children from the doctor's neighborhood associated with the other children in Longwood, as was to be expected, and, lo and behold, one bright day the school was closed—all the schools were closed. Longwood had whooping cough for fair, and whooping cough is no respecter of persons. It attacked young and old as well, strong and weak, male and female.

At first they took it as a joke, except those mothers who knew really what it meant and what it involved. But in a few more days all Longwood was in agony—spasmodic agony—and then Longwood as one man sought for a remedy.

"Try the Balm of a Thousand Flowers, ma'am," the druggist would say. "A new remedy and a good one and very cheap. We can recommend it. I can, for my little boy"—and so on.

The town bought Ripley's remedy. The supply became exhausted. Dr. Ripley had to hire help. He became famous. From selling his remedy he became the crack whooping-cough doctor and sold prescriptions like cakes off a hot griddle.

"The Balm of a Thousand Flowers" was the cry. Everybody bought it, and in the direct sequence of cause and effect, because everybody bought the remedy. So young Dr. Ripley proceeded to buy a horse and buggy and then a new house, and around the house was a flower bed, and in the flower bed were planted at least a thousand flowers.

"Nance," he said one day, "it's funny, but do you know, in the next town there's not a sign of whooping cough. Strange, isn't it? By the way, how do you think Marion is coming on?"

"Beautifully," exclaimed his wife. "But she coughs as yet."

"Nance," went on the doctor, "I've got some relatives in the next town. Wouldn't you like to take Marion and go over there and make a visit? It'll be a change for you, and perhaps her cough will get better there."

Mrs. Ripley smiled significantly. "I will," she replied, "on one condition, and that is that you'll tell me what you put in the Balm of a Thousand Flowers."

"I'll do it," he replied, "but never tell. In this that I sell now I put about the same things that the other medicines have, but the main ingredients are the same as I gave Marion on the day before we moved."

"And," asked Mrs. Ripley, "is it really made up of a thousand flowers or is that only a name?"

"It's not a name," replied the doctor, "and it is really gathered from a thousand—L-won't say a thousand, but from hundreds of flowers at any rate. That's true, Nance."

"How could it be?" she protested doubtfully.

"Well," he replied, "I tell the truth. It is gathered from hundreds and hundreds of flowers. You can judge for yourself when I tell you what it chiefly is."

"Tell me," she commanded.

"Honey and beeswax and castile soap, the balm of a thousand flowers," he said.

"But the castile soap?" she insisted. He nodded.

"That's the only lye there is about it," he returned.

Grass That "Tires."

In some parts of New Mexico there grows a grass which produces a somniferous effect on the animals that graze upon it. Horses, after eating the grass, in nearly all cases sleep standing while cows and sheep almost invariably lie down.

It has occasionally happened that travelers have stopped to allow horses to feed in places where the grass grows pretty thickly and the animals have had time to eat a considerable quantity before its effects manifested themselves.

In such cases horses have gone to sleep on the road and it is hard to arouse them. The effect of the grass passes off in an hour or two, and no bad results have ever been noticed on account of it. Cattle on the ranches frequently come upon patches of this grass, where they feed for perhaps half an hour and then fall asleep for an hour or more, when they wake up and start feeding again. The programme is repeated perhaps a dozen times until thirst obliges them to go to water.

Whether, like the poppy, the grass contains opium, or whether its sleep producing property is due to some other substance is not known.

Not Expecting a Flood.

An old lady recently bargained with a cabman standing outside Colchester railway station to take her into the town.

The sum being agreed upon, the dame returned into the station and soon reappeared with two parrots in cages, which she handed up to the cabman. Again she journeyed to the platform and brought out two cats. A third trip she made, bringing back a daintily dressed fox terrier, and a fourth expedition was interrupted by cabbie exclaiming:

"Beggin' your pardon, ma'am, but you ain't expectin' a flood, I ope?"

"Dear me, no," was the reply. "What ever made you ask that question, cabbie?"

"Oh, Miss, right, ma'am," said John. "I thought I'd ask, 'cos I ain't certain as 'ow my horse can swim, and I fancied by the look of your luggage that you were taking my horse for a Noah's ark."—London Answers.

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February 17, 1903.
ESTATE OF CATHERINE RAYNER, deceased.

Pursuant to the order of JOSEPH W. ELLOR, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, in the application of the undersigned executor of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit to the undersigned under call of affirmance of said deceased and demands against the estate of said deceased within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from presenting or recovering the same against the estate of said deceased.

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